

**Testimony of Louisa Printz in support of S.B. 31, An Act Concerning Continued  
Delivery of Legal Services to the Poor (March 10, 2014 Judiciary Committee)**

---

Testimony for CT Legal Services

March 10, 2014

I am here representing Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury because you need to know how important CT Legal Services is to our clients. Safe Haven provides emergency shelter and comprehensive supportive services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault

The majority of our clients would never be able to afford these legal services. We have referred clients for immigration, housing, benefits and most frequently for divorce and custody.

Recently we referred a woman who had three children. Her husband was abusive and was kicking his wife out of the home. He wanted to keep the children. She called us about coming to our shelter with the children. Unfortunately we were full, so we offered her shelter outside of Waterbury. She did not want to do that since it would disrupt her children's lives with school and their doctors. With help from the Legal Aid attorney she was able to stay in the home, the court ordered child support for her children and dad has one day of visitation weekly.

Another client is a young mom with two daughters ages 4 and 2. She is from El Salvador. She dated her husband for six years before marrying him. He promised her wonderful life in the United States. He was very verbally abusive and put her down all the time. He forced her to work in his store for about 12 hours a day and then expected her to come home and do all the cooking and cleaning. He told her that if she refused to work in the store that he would not buy the family food. She and the girls have gone to the Soup Kitchen. The worst incident is when her 4 year old was sick and her husband would not take them to the hospital. She walked both ways with both children. After that she called Safe Haven. After several counseling sessions, we referred her to CT Legal Services. They helped her get a Green Card and remain in the United States. They also helped her get a divorce and custody. She has since remarried to a wonderful man. She works at a woman's shelter in another state because she wants to help women like herself.

If it weren't for CT Legal Services, these would have been very sad stories. Legal aid made all the difference. We have no where else to refer these clients.

Louisa Printz

Community Educator

Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury